

Message Text

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ACTION AF-10

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FM AMEMBASSY COTONOU

TO SECSTATE WASHDC 0368

INFO AMEMBASSY ABIDJAN

AMEMBASSY ACCRA

AMEMBASSY ALGIERS

AMEMBASSY CONAKRY

AMEMBASSY LAGOS

AMEMBASSY LOME

AMEMBASSY NIAMEY

AMEMBASSY NOUAKCHOTT

AMEMBASSY OSLO

AMEMBASSY OUAGADOUGOU

AMEMBASSY PARIS

AMEMBASSY PRETORIA

AMEMBASSY RABAT

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E.O. 11652: N/A

TAGS: PORG, DM

SUBJ: CONSLUSION OF COTONOU INTERNATIONAL CONFERENCE ON
MERCENARIES

REF: COTONOU 0055

SUMMARY: COTONOU INTERNATIONAL CONFERENCE ON MERCENARY ACTIVI-
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TIES CONSLUDED WITH EXPECTED CONDEMNATION OF USE OF MERCENARIES
AND EXPRESSION OF SOLIDARITY WITH LIBERATION MOVEMENTS. SINCE
CONFERENCE BACKED LARGELY BY ALGERIA, POLISARIO FRONT HAD
PROMINENT ROLE. NORTH KOREAN AND CUBAN INFLUENCE EVIDENT AS
WELL. END SUMMARY.

1. COTONOU INTERNATIONAL CONFERENCE ON MERCENARY ACTIVITIES

CONCLUDED JAN 16 WITH SPEECHES BY GOVERNMENT OF PEOPLE'S REPUBLIC OF BENIN (GPRB) PRESIDENT KEREKOU AND THE POLISARIO FRONT/SAHARAOUI DEMOCRATIC PEOPLE'S REPUBLIC (SDPR) "FOREIGN MINISTER" HAKIM IBRAHIM. KEREKOU'S SPEECH, WHICH CONTAINED "COTONOU DECLARATION" CALLING ON ALL PROGRESSIVE STATES TO FORM AN ANTI-IMPERIALIS FRONT, RESTATED IN NAME OF CON-FRENCE SAME DENUNCIATIONS OF IMPERIALISM AND SUPPORT FOR LIBERATION MOVEMENTS CITED REFTEL. POLISARIO/(SDPR) "FOREIGN MINISTER" IBRAHIM CONDEMNED FRENCH IMPERIALIST INTERVENTION IN THE WESTERN SAHARA AND CALLED ON ANOTHER REPRESENTATIVE OF SDPR TO READ RESOLUTIONS TAKEN DURING FINAL SESSION OF CONF.

2. CONF AGREED UPON THE FOLLOWING GENERAL PRINCIPLES:
(A) TO CARRY OUT AN INTERNATIONAL SENSITIZATION CAMPAIGN TO ALERT WORLD TO MISDEEDS OF INTERNATIONAL IMPERIALISM AGAINST PROGRESSIVE COUNTRIES; (B) TO INCREASE MATERIAL, POLITICAL AND DIPLOMATIC ASSISTANCE TO LIBERATION MOVEMENTS AND PROGRESSIVE COUNTRIES FIGHTING IMPERIALISM; (C) TO FACILITATE ACCOMMODATION OF VICTIMS OF COLONIAL AGGRESSION BOTH IN HOSPITALS AND APPROPRIATE CENTERS; (D) TO INCREASE AID TO PROGRESSIVE COUNTRIES HAVING COMMON BORDERS WITH COUNTRIES STILL "UNDER DOMINATION"; (E) TO PROMOTE COLLECTIVE ACTION AMONG CONFERENCE PARTICIPANTS TO LEAD INTERNATIONAL ORGANIZATIONS TO ASSUME PROPER RESPONSIBILITY FOR STRUGGLING PEOPLES; (F) TO SHOW PROMPT AND VIGOROUS SOLIDARITY WITH ANY LIMITED OFFICIAL USE

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AFRICAN COUNTRY WHICH IS THE VICTIM OF IMPERIALIST AGGRESSION OR WHOSE TERRITORIAL INTEGRITY IS THREATENED; AND (G) TO ESTABLISH AN INTERNATIONAL BODY DESTINED TO ERADICATE THE INSTITUTION OF MERCENARIES.

3. TO SURPRISE OF MOST OBSERVERS, FIRST RESOLUTION DEALT NOT WITH AFRICA BUT WITH KOREA. THE CONFERENCE STRONGLY CONDEMNED THE UNITED STATES FOR ITS "HYPOCRISY" IN CALLING FOR PEACE WHILE GIVING AID TO THE "FACIST, PUPPET" PARK REGIME, AS WELL AS FOR "FABRICATION" CONCERNING THE EXISTENCE OF TWO KOREAS. RESOLUTION CALLED ON ALL NATIONS TO PUT PRESSURE ON US TO WITHDRAW IN ORDER TO PERMIT REUNIFICATION OF KOREA ON FIVE-POINT BASIS ESTABLISHED BY DEMOCRATIC PEOPLE'S REPUBLIC OF KOREA.

4. SECOND RESOLUTION EXPRESSED IN GENERAL TERMS CONFERENCE SUPPORT FOR AFRICAN LIBERATION STRUGGLE, WHICH IT CHARACTERIZED IN TERMS OF PROGRESSIVE VERSUS IMPERIALIST FORCES, AND CONDEMNED THE WESTERN POWERS "OPEN COALITION WITH REACTIONARY FORCES." RESOLUTION SAVED PLACE OF HONOR AMONG IMPERIALIST PLOTTERS FOR FRANCE, WHICH WAS CALLED "PRINCIPAL INSTIGATOR" OF JANUARY 16, 1977 MERCENARY ATTACK ON COTONOU. FRANCE,

WAS ALSO SEVERLY ATTACKED IN KEREKOU'S SPEECH FOR ITS COOPERATION WITH MOROCCO AND MAURETANIA IN A "WAR OF GENOCIDE" AGAINST THE SAHARAUI PEOPLE. KEREKOU ACCUSED "LA FRANCE GISCARDIENNE" OF SEEKING ITS REVENGE AGAINST THE ALGERIAN REVOLUTION BY WAGING WAR AT THE "GATES" OF THAT COUNTRY.

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5. IN ADDITION TO THE USUAL RHETORIC, KEREKOU'S SPEECH CONTAINED STRONG STATEMENT DEFENDING CUBA'S ROLE IN ANGOLA. SPEAKING IN THE NAME OF THE CONFERENCE PARTICIPANTS, KEREKOU DENOUNCED THE "SLANDEROUS PROPAGANDA OF INTERNATIONAL AND AFRICAN REACTIONARIES WHO SEEK TO DISTORT THE NATURE OF CUBAN ASSISTANCE TO ANGOLA AND OTHER AFRICAN COUNTRIES WISHING TO BENEFIT FROM THIS NOBLE ASSISTANCE TO FIGHT IMPERIALISM

IN AFRICA". KEREKOU SAID THE CONFERENCE "BOWS WITH EMOTION
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BEFORE THE MEMORY OF THE GLORIOUS SONS OF CUBA WHO FELL ON
THE BATTLEFIELD OF ANGOLA."

6. COMMENT: CONFERENCE, WHICH WAS ESSENTIALLY A MUTUAL
ADMIRATION GATHERING FOR "PROGRESSIVE" STATES AND LIBERATION
MOVEMENTS, WAS APPARENTLY ORGANIZED ON BENIN'S INITIATIVE
WITH FINANCIAL BACKING FROM ALGERIA AND LIBYA. BENIN,
ANXIOUS TO DRAW INTERNATIONAL ATTENTION TO THE JANUARY 16, 1977
MERCENARY "AGGRESSION", IN RETURN, BENIN WAS PREPARED TO
GIVE SPECIAL PROMINENCE TO POLISARIO CAUSE. POLISARIO
"FOREIGN MINISTER" IBRAHIM CO-CHAIRING CLOSING CEREMONIES
WHICH TOOK PLACE IN COTONOU'S STADIUM. PRESIDENT KEREKOU, WHO
SELDOM REMAINS IN BACKGROUND, SHOWED IBRAHIM SPECIAL DEFER-
ENCE. TO OUR KNOWLEDGE IT IS FIRST TIME THAT A VISITING
FOREIGN DIGNITARY HAS PLAYED SUCH A ROLE AT A MASS GATHERING
IN COTONOU. LIBYA, IN TURN, APPEARS TO HAVE BEEN CONTENT WITH
PLAYING A CULTURAL ROLE: A LARGE FOLD-DANCING TROUPE PER-
FORMED AT VARIOUS TIMES DURING
THE CONFERENCE FESTIVITIES, AND
LIBYA IS PRESENTLY HOLDING A BOOK EXPOSITION IN COTONOU.

7. ALTHOUGH ALGERIA AND LIBYA BORE BRUNT OF EXPENSES,
N. KOREA AND CUBA EVIDENTLY TOOK ADVANTAGE OF THEIR
SPECIAL RELATIONSHIP WITH BENIN TO ENSURE THAT THEIR PRIME
CONCERNS RECEIVED PROPER ATTENTION IN THE FINAL REPORTS.
FROM OUR ADMITTEDLY LIMITED KNOWLEDGE OF CUBAN ATTITUDES,
IT IS INTERESTING THAT CUBA FELT IT HAD TO JUSTIFY ITS ROLE
IN ANGOLA BEFORE A GATHERING OF FELLOW REVOLUTIONARIES.
APPARENTLY SOME "PROGRESSIVE" COUNTRIES ARE MORE SENSITIVE
TO INTERNATIONAL PUBLIC OPINION THAN THEY WOULD OTHERWISE
LIKE TO ADMIT. THOMPSON

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